

# 10 Types of Christian Leadership

David Murray



Recently I was asked to give a conference address on “Positive Leadership.” It got me thinking about how many different kinds of pastoral leadership I’d come across in my ministry.

**Mr. Passive** never takes a step forwards. Like a snooker ball, he just waits to be hit by the next event. If he can maintain the status quo or manage a congregation’s gradual decline, he’s quite happy.

If Mr. Passive is a snooker ball, **Mr. Dictator** is the snooker cue. He’s always pushing his way around, pushing others out of his way, and aggressively pushing his own agenda with little thought about the knock-on effects for others. Sometimes he pushes so hard that he rips the cloth and ends the game for himself and everyone else too.

**Mr. Crisis** is neither too passive nor too aggressive. He doesn’t try to avoid difficulties like Mr. Passive and he doesn’t create difficulties like Mr. Dictator. But he loves difficulties when they come. Not so active in normal times, he thrives in a crisis, especially when the spotlight is on him. He’ll lead through the Red Sea, but he’s not so keen on the wilderness bit.

**Mr. Inconsistent** can clear the table sometimes and hardly hit a ball at other times. You just don’t know what to expect on any given Sunday. He’s up, and then he’s down. Sometimes his sermons soar, and sometimes they sink. Happy and encouraged one day, miserable and depressed the next. Determined to stay for the rest of his life, threatening to resign the next day. Completely unpredictable and unreliable.

Every leader has fears – he’d be foolish not to – but **Mr. Fearful** is characterized by fear, overwhelmed with fear, never gets past fear, is dominated by fear, and makes decisions based on fear. But, just like the animals, his people can smell his fear, especially in his preaching. Most have stopped following him, and some have started intimidating him.

When people think of **Mr. Pessimist**, a little passport picture of him pops out of their mental files and displays a glum sad, hopeless, and depressed expression. A dark cloud hovers above him and rains whenever there’s a hint of sunlight in his life or ministry. Growth in other churches is suspect. A cheerful Christian is a shallow Christian. Sin and judgment are his themes and shall be till he dies – which always seems to be just round the corner.

**Mr. Boastful** knows how to make other preachers feel really bad, and seems to enjoy doing so. He's an expert with statistics and always seems to have his latest church attendance, Sunday school figures, baptisms, conference invites, etc., at the tip of his fingers. When people visit his church, it never seems to be quite as big or as lively as he claims, but then you can't lie with the stats, can you?

**Mr. Academic** has read every book you've ever read and twice as much again. He can quote early church fathers, reformers, puritans, and modern church leaders as if he knew them all personally. Calls himself a "Pastor-scholar" but there's little of the former and much more of the latter. Argues that the best way to pastor his flock is to spend 40 hours on each sermon. The sheep just don't know how lucky they are.

You've probably already met **Mr. Sociable**. Everyone else has. He loves socializing and plans a lot of it every week: lots of visits for lots of hours. And he especially welcomes unplanned visitors and calls. People are far more important than studying the passage in Greek or simplifying that complex paragraph towards the end of the sermon. He's greatly loved in the community, but those who have to listen to him every week are growing less enamored.

Paper, emails, reports, committees, church law, and bureaucratic procedures are **Mr. Administrator's** favorite companions. Given the choice between ministry and administration, the latter always seems more urgent, if not important. I mean people can wait, but this report is due next week. Rather than squeezing in paperwork between sermons and visitation, sermon prep and pastoral visitation are squeezed into ever-smaller gaps between the vital office work.

I'm sure you've met some of these Pastors, and more. Why not describe some other characters in the comments below?

As a Pastor myself, I recognize all of these people almost every time I look in the mirror. Yes, I have been all of these people at one time or other, and sometimes all in the one day!

Yet, for all of our faults, the Lord still uses "earthen vessels," that the treasure of His grace might shine all the more beautifully in us and through us (2 Corinthians 2:7 (<http://www.biblestudytools.com/search/?q=2co+2:7>)).

At the end of every day I bring my multiple sinful personalities to the cross and appeal once again for forgiveness, looking to the Christ who died for my sins, and for the sins of every Christian pastor. The more I preach and pastor people, the more I value Jesus's atoning work, and the more I marvel at His perfect life and ministry over 33 years.

Whoever else we follow, let's make sure we follow Him above all. Because He promised, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19 (<http://www.biblestudytools.com/search/?q=mt+4:19>)).

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